# Hourigan family are honoured for serving local and national interests

At the Fine Gael tribute to the Hourigan family in the Castle Oaks Hotel, Castleconnell, Eleanora Hogan, Paddy Hourigan, Mayor Michael Hourigan, party leader Enda Kenny; Nina Maria Hourigan, Deputy Michael Noonan and Leo Walsh (CI)

Richard Hourigan, Tess Frost, Mayor Michael Hourigan and Fr Joe Hourigan (CI)

Mayor Hourigan pictured with his family, daughter Sinead Hourigan-Buckley; Owen Buckley, wife, Pat; son, Patrick, and daughter, Niamh

Past and present members of the Limerick County Council with Enda Kenny (CI)

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

FEW families in one generation have made such a contribution to political life in Limerick as the Hourigans of Lisnagry, who were honoured by the Fine Gael leader, Enda Kenny, at a special tribute last Friday night in the Castle Oaks Hotel in Castleconnell.

Supporters, colleagues and friends from across the political divide came in their droves to laud former county council chairman, Paddy Hourigan, who served for 32 years; his late brother, Richard, who gave two terms in the Senate, and their first cousin, Cllr Michael Hourigan, the Mayor of Limerick.

They were all described as honourable men, but one of the most eloquent tributes came from a one time political adversary of Paddy's on the Council—the current County Council Cathaoirleach, Cllr Eddie Wade of Fianna Fáil.

"I came on the Council in 1979 when Paddy was already a seasoned campaigner. But from the very beginning, I've always found him a most honourable, decent, upright man.

"With Paddy, the people always came first, regardless of party politics. He worked hard for his people without thought to class or creed. He was a tremendous servant of the people, one of nature's gentlemen," he said.

Mr Kenny presented a bronze statue of Michael Collins to Paddy, Mayor Michael and to Nina-Marie Hourigan, lawyer and daughter of the late Richard.

Presentations from Murroe, Ahane and Castleconnell FG were made to Paddy Hourigan by John Egan; Joe Barry, John Cushnahan and Betty Downes.

"Thank you for all your work [illegible]," said Egan, "now for the first time in memory we are without a county councillor, and we once had three."

Bouquets were presented to Paddy's wife, Ann, and to Michael's wife, Pat.

Deputy Kenny said that the party was indebted to the Hourigan family for their contribution to politics.

"The Hourigan family have always demonstrated a deep commitment to public service and public representation. It is a privilege [illegible] me [illegible] tonight to participate in this tribute. Fine Gael as a party is indebted to them for their contribution over many years to the Limerick community and to democracy in the county," he said.

Deputy Kenny described the late Sen Richard Hourigan as "an eloquent speaker in the Senate".

"He had a first hand knowledge of agriculture and many of the things he spoke about have come to pass. I am proud to have known him," he said.

He praised Paddy's work for his community, which, despite the fact that he was no longer a councillor, is still continuing in his role as chairman of Murroe community council.

"He's not gone away, you know," he told Cllr Wade.

Deputy Kenny said that the perception of Limerick was finally moving in the right direction thanks mainly to Mayor Hourigan who had worked tirelessly to change the image of the city.

"The Irish public is a hard taskmaster, but it has returned the Hourigans again and again to serve the people. Serving the people was part of their nature. The Hourigans can look anyone in the eye and say that they made no enemies in all their years representing the people of Limerick," he said.

Deputy Michael Noonan said he and Paddy Hourigan became great friends from his own first day on Limerick County Council back in 1974.

"Paddy had the longest service on the Council—32 years—and it's ironic that he got the second biggest vote in the last election, a tribute to his sense of honour and confidentiality.

"The people of County Limerick, have always appreciated the contribution of the Hourigan family, particularly to agriculture. The late Richard Hourigan, in addition to being a senator on the agricultural panel, was a former chief executive of the IFA. He travelled the country to build the IFA into the strong national organisation that it is today. He was an eloquent speaker, and in his college days, won the gold medal for oratory.

"Paddy is a farmer, with an in depth knowledge of the industry. During his long and distinguished political career, he was a member and served as chairman of the County Committee of Agriculture.

"Farmers all over Munster continue to be grateful to Michael Hourigan for his advice and assistance in his role as Teagasc adviser.

"The Hourigan family's contribution to politics has been across all policy areas and sectors of the community. But their contribution to agriculture has been particularly noteworthy," said Deputy Noonan.

"Michael," he said, "is the most recent representative from the Hourigan clan. He is an outstanding Mayor of Limerick and it makes you proud to be a Fine Gel member when you see him representing the city.

"It would be hard to find a family who made such a contribution in one generation to Limerick city and county," Deputy Noonan said.

Cllr Mary Jackman paid tribute to all the Hourigans and said she had served with Paddy on the Council for 19 years.

"He is a man of the community, a man of the people, always very gentle and calm, and always having time to listen to people in trouble," she said.

Cllr Diarmaid Scully paid tribute to the Hourigans on behalf of Fine Gael in the city.

"We have been waiting a long time, since 1984, for a Fine Gael Mayor. Now we have the most energetic Mayor in decades He has been consistent in pushing the image of the city. He has made the boundary an issue again and he has served the city with pride and distinction," he said.

MC for the evening was the East Limerick Fine Gael Constituency chairman, Leo Walsh. The attendance came from across the political divide and included former Minister for Defence, Michael Noonan, FF; John Gallahue, FF, John Finucane, PD, and Joe Meagher, FF.

Members of the Hourigan family present were Paddy's wife Ann, and their children, Monica, Kathleen, James and Patrick, and Michael's wife Pat, and family Niamh, Patrick, Sinead, and her husband, Eoin Buckley. Their other children Conor, Neasa, and Katie and Brian, who is in Australia, were unable to attend. Also present were his brothers Fr Joe Hourigan, Richard and his wife, Alice, and his sister Tess Frost.

Paddy Hourigan with his family, Kathleen, Patrick, Anne, James and Monica (CI)

Enda Kenny presents statues of Michael Collins to Mayor Michael Hourigan, Paddy Hourigan, and Nina Marie Hourigan (CI)

Monica and Paddy Hourigan with Enda Kenny (CI)

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